

Series: T.U.L.I.P
Title: Irresistible Grace
Text: Psalm 65: 4
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Psalm 65: 4: Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

A very simple way of declaring the doctrine of God's grace is by the acronym T.U.L.I.P:

T—total depravity

U—unconditional election—*"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest..."*

L—limited atonement—particular redemption—Christ accomplished redemption for the elect alone—He said, *"I lay down my life for the sheep."*

I—irresistible grace—*"Blessed is the man whom thou...causest to approach unto thee"*—those God chose, Christ redeemed and God causes to approach him in spirit and in truth.

P—preservation and perseverance of the saints—the believer perseveres in faith unto the end by God's preserving grace.

Subject: Irresistible Grace

Proposition: God gives spiritual life and irresistibly causes each of his children to approach unto him through faith in Christ.

THE WILL AND PURPOSE OF GOD

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is God's eternal will and purpose to irresistibly cause each of his people to approach him through faith in Christ. God's counsel is immutable—fixed and unalterable.

Therefore, whatever God purposed in eternity, God brings to pass in time. Nothing stops God from bringing to pass the counsel of his own will. Believers have *"obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"* (Eph 1:11).

What did God will and purpose to do for those the Father chose in Christ? In 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, the apostle Paul is writing to believers when he declares God's will and purpose.

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation..." God's purpose in choosing his people was to save us. The Lord did not choose us to offer salvation to us. God chose his people to save us! How?

“Through sanctification of the Spirit...” It is God’s will and purpose that God the Holy Spirit sanctify—set apart and make holy—those he chose to save. God the Spirit set us apart from the rest of fallen sinners by creating in us a new holy and righteous man in the image of Christ. This work of sanctification is accomplished in regeneration. This is one reason Christ said, *“Ye must be born again”* (Jn 3: 3-7). What else is God’s will and purpose for those he chose to save?

“And belief of the truth.” It was God’s will and purpose to save his elect through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Christ is the Truth. The Holy Spirit gives us faith to believe on Christ.

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel...” God purposed to call his people to a belief of the truth through the preaching of the truth. Therefore, God sends us the gospel of his Son. All God’s elect are given faith to believe on Christ the same way, *“after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”* (Eph 1: 13). It pleased God to save his elect through the preaching of the gospel. (1 Cor 1: 21)

“To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” When God has given us faith in Christ, God gives his child the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ: free justification, free redemption, a new creation in holiness and righteousness so that we can enjoy heavens glory conformed to Christ’s image.

So we see that we are not called to faith in Christ by our will, our purpose or our works. It is according to God’s eternal, immutable counsel that God irresistibly calls each of his elect.

Jeremiah 31:3: The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I DRAWN thee.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

John 10: 16: And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

God is holy. Everything God does is in accordance with his holy character. God is sovereign. But God only executes his sovereign power to do what is holy and right. God is love. But God only loves in Christ where his love saves in a holy and right way. So it is with all God’s works, they are performed in holiness and righteousness.

The gospel is the righteousness of God that God sent his Son into this world to declare in the salvation of his people.

Romans 3: 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Christ declared the righteousness of God by honoring the law by establishing it in perfect obedience in precept and penalty as the Head of his people. Christ declared God just by being made sin for his people and by being made a curse for his people. Christ declared God the Justifier by justifying all those God draws to believe on Christ. He declared the righteousness of God when Christ made justice and mercy meet in harmony by his righteousness and shed blood shed only for the elect of God.

Therefore, since Christ has accomplished this work of redemption for all God's elect, it would not be in accordance with God's holy character for God to demand a second payment from his elect. As Augustus Toplady wrote in his hymn,

"If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my place endured
The whole of wrath divine,
Payment God will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

God's holiness demands each one that Christ redeemed must be irresistibly called to life and faith in Christ. This is why our great Shepherd declared that he "must" bring, not only his lost sheep from among the Jews, but his other lost sheep from among the Gentiles—*"them also I MUST bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one-fold, and one shepherd."*

Christ did not say he might bring us if we would accept him and not resist him. No! The Son of God must bring all God's elect irresistibly into one-fold through faith in him because he is the good Shepherd responsible for our salvation. His holiness demands it.

Only those called in irresistible power, through the power of the gospel, behold the mercy and truth of God kiss in harmony in Christ crucified. Therefore, Christ is the wisdom and power of God only unto us who have experienced this irresistible call of God's grace.

1 Corinthians 1: 21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22: For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are CALLED both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25: Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

1 Corinthians 2: 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

God must call his people irresistibly to life and cause us to approach unto him through faith in Christ because left to ourselves we will not and cannot do so.

Every spiritually dead sinner has a will but it is bound to our sin-nature. The carnal mind hates God. We will not and cannot submit to the gospel and believe on Christ, trusting him to save us apart from our works. Christ said to the Pharisee's,

John 5: 39: Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40: And YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, that ye might have life.

The only way sinners will come to him is by being irresistibly born of God and caused by God to believe on Christ's name.

John 1: 11: He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

THE GENERAL AND IRRESISTIBLE CALL

As the gospel is preached there is a *general call* going forth to all in the congregation because all hear the word preached. But the only ones who willingly come to God through faith in Christ are those he *irresistibly, effectually calls*. We see the necessity of this irresistible call when we consider the general call and the irresistible call side by side.

After Christ fed the multitude, a host of people followed him, along with his apostles. Christ preached the gospel to them all—the *general call*. We hear the response of depraved sinners left to themselves as we hear the Jews murmur at the gospel they heard Christ preach.

John 6: 41: The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42: And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

Then the Lord Jesus tells them not to murmur. He declares that no man can come to him if left to ourselves. It is a necessity that the Father teach his children and draw us irresistibly to Christ.

John 6: 43: Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44: NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, EXCEPT THE FATHER WHICH HATH SENT ME DRAW HIM: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught OF GOD. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned OF THE FATHER, COMETH UNTO ME.

Next, we see the response of those who only heard the general call. This is what all sinners do who God leaves to their own will.

John 6: 66: From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

But in Christ's eleven apostles we see the response of those called irresistibly to Christ.

John 6: 67: Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68: Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69: And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70: Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

Judas, along with those who went away, only heard the general call as Christ preached to them all. But Peter and the other apostles had been chosen and caused to approach unto Christ. They could not leave Christ. They could not leave his gospel because Christ words were eternal life unto them. They were given life and faith and were sure that Christ is the Son of the living God. This is the result of God irresistibly drawing us to Christ.

Another example is in John 10. Here Christ declares the difference between those who are left to themselves and those who are irresistibly called.

John 10: 24: Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25: Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not:

the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26: But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

The Jews heard the general call from Christ himself and even saw the works he did. But rather than believe on Christ they accused Christ of making them doubt. Then Christ declared that the reason they did not believe is because they were not his sheep. Since they were not his sheep, Christ did not call them and know them irresistibly. Then Christ declares that it is he who makes the difference in those who are called irresistibly:

John 10: 27: My sheep hear my voice. As the gospel is going forth in the general call, Christ speaks effectually within his sheep.

John 10: 27...and I know them. By this intimate knowing in our new heart, Christ effectually makes his redeemed know him.

John 10: 27...and they follow me. 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

This is the only way that we know we are elected of God. As the gospel is preached to us, Christ makes it not come in word only but also in power. He irresistibly calls us through the power of the Holy Ghost. This is what the apostle Paul told the Thessalonians,

1 Thessalonians 1: 4: Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6: And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

In scripture, this irresistible call is attributed to God the Father, Christ the Son and God the Holy Spirit. But never is it attributed to the sinner. Nor does the sinner ever resist this call. This call is as irresistible as a sinner trying resist the wind.

John 3: 7: Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8: The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He creates in us a new nature—a new man, a new heart, a new spirit. (Eze 11: 19; 36:26; Eph 4: 24; Col 3:10) In this new man Christ gives us a new will. God the Father raised Christ Jesus to his right hand and promised, “*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*” (Ps 110:3).

Many times, when declaring this good news, I have heard sinners say, “I am not going to be made to do something against my will!” Oh, no! When Christ comes in power, he makes his people willing by giving us an entirely new will in our new nature!

Therefore, his call is irresistible. When Christ came to Lazarus' grave, Lazarus had been buried for four days. But Christ called, “*Lazarus, come forth!*” Did Lazarus resist? “*And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go*” (Jn 11: 43-44). When Christ calls a spiritually dead sinner. “*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*”

In fact, the new will Christ gives is bound to the new nature Christ gives. Therefore, we cannot sin by not believing on Christ. In other words, those called irresistibly to life and faith in Christ cannot NOT believe on

Christ nor can we cease loving those begotten of him. This is the one unmistakable, manifest difference between the child of God and the child of the devil.

1 John 3: 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

When Christ has irresistibly called us then we cannot do anything but believe on Christ and love our brethren. He has the words of eternal life; he makes us sure and we believe he is the Christ, the Son of God; he makes us satisfied with him! *“Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we SHALL BE SATISFIED with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.”* We are satisfied with the goodness of his house because for the first time we know that God has worked all things in our salvation according to his eternal purpose.

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are THE CALLED according to his purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also CALLED: and whom he CALLED, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? 32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Amen!